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FROM: THE SITUATION ROOM TOHAK 30TO: DAVE GOMPERT FOR
THE SECRETARY

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MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

April 5, 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR SECRETARY KISSINGER

FROM: The Situation Room
SUBJECT: Morning News Summary

The Washington Post

H.D.S. Greenway covers President Thieu's speech and cabinet reshuffle, which political observers view as a further sign of Thieu's growing political weakness, nervousness, and isolation. A companion article says many cities and towns reported lost to the North Vietnamese army, it has now become clear, were simply abandoned in a southward-moving panic that advanced far faster than the northern army. (A-1)

Lewis Simons reports on the first five communist regiments pressing northward for what is expected to be an all-out attack on Phnom Penh. He outlines the possible objective of the communists and explores the broad range of events leading to the current situation. (A-1)

David Fouquet, writing a special for the Post, quotes NATO sources to the effect that the inability of the U.S. to come to the aid of its allies in Southeast Asia is not taken as a warning that a similar fate could befall the alliance in time of need. (A-5)

A editorial says that the formation of a new government in Turkey does not mean progress in the Cyprus negotiations. Turkey has used the Cyprus dispute to arouse a nationalistic purpose, and compromise would make the new government vulnerable to rivals. The U.S. Congress does not seem to be budging either. The administration's new request to lift the aid ban is still dominated by personal defensiveness and institutional pride. Meanwhile, Cyprus goes deeper under. (A-10)

Rita Hauser says the collapse of your Middle East negotiation effort may be a blessing in disguise, a discarding of a mini-resolution in favor of bold diplomacy in which the interests of Israel and the U.S. should be coincidental and not divergent. If Israel is to relinquish real property, it should be in exchange for what has been lacking up to now: normalization of a conflict through a peace conference in which all parties, not the victor alone, abandon ancient claims in favor of a new reality. (A-10)

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Evans and Novak believe the collapse of South Vietnam can be traced to President Thieu's personality -- authoritarian, stubborn, but impulsive -- along with new military conditions. For the White House to blame Congress is political overkill. Thieu's military withdrawal without prior planning was unlikely to succeed. What doomed it was the flood of civilian refugees which began immediately. (A-11)

Clayton Fritchey views the failure of personal diplomacy to reach agreement in the Middle East as an opportunity for Moscow and Washington to make a new joint effort toward stabilizing the region. Your return empty-handed is no cause for unrelieved despair, and your long negotiations with both sides may have cleared away enough underbrush to improve the chances of getting a settlement at Geneva. There is little justification for alarmist talk about an imminent new Mideast war. It is time to put detente to a real test, not through an imposed peace by the super powers but through making it possible for both the Arabs and Israelis to reach an agreement they say they want but cannot seem to negotiate for themselves. (A-11)

The Washinton Star

North Vietnam is believed to be moving all but one of its eight reserve divisions in South Vietnam, according to Western intelligence officials. The communists now have an estimated 20 divisions in the south. (A-1)

The Rockefeller commission announced there was "no credible evidence" of CIA involvement in President Kennedy's assassination. (A-6)

The Baltimore Sun

Walt W. Rostow contends the U.S. should land two marine divisions in North Vietnam and keep them there with air and naval support until the communists agree to abide by the 1973 Paris peace accords. He said the executive and legislature should come together to design a firm course of action. (A-2)

Gilbert Lewthwaite says the French view the Vietnam crisis with a sense of deja vu. It is only the manner and speed with which South Vietnam is collapsing, rather than the fact the communists are winning, that causes the surprise. (A-2)

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Henry Trehwitt writes of the doubt some of President Ford's specialists have about the decision to emphasize the disarray in foreign policy just before asking Congress and the public to unite behind him. A State Department official said he would go before Congress in a "weak position" and would need "an attitude of greater confidence." For his views to prevail he will have to generate a sea of change in congressional and public attitudes. (A-4)

Garry Wills thinks your step-by-step diplomacy failed partly because you tried to divide things into too small segments. If Moscow and Washington had worked together for a joint Egyptian-Syrian agreement, rather than Egypt alone, it might have carried more weight with the Israelis. Yet there is danger in the all or nothing approach to the problem advocated by Stanley Hoffman. To encourage Israel to weaken its ties to America is to encourage the worst tendencies in both countries. (A-17)

The New York Times

Malcolm Browne highlights President Thieu's cabinet shift and criticism of the U.S. Various high-ranking South Vietnamese officers have been holding almost nonstop conferences with the national leadership in an attempt to persuade Thieu to step down. It is rumored that the communists plan to give President Thieu until next Tuesday to resign and if he has not done so, they will attack. (1)

Leslie Gelb quotes one White House official as saying that the positions of the three aircraft carriers normally in the western Pacific had not changed but that they would react swiftly to any evacuation contingency plans. (1)

Henry Giniger details the new constitution imposed on Portugal by the Armed Forces Movement. The document guarantees that all essential power for the next three to five years is vested in the military council. Acceptance of the constitution by all the major political parties has in effect turned the upcoming election into a plebiscite for the armed forces. (1)

Richard Eder assesses the polemics of Portuguese politics and concludes that at this stage it seems that the armed forces movement seems to be looking in the long run to a Portugal with a socialist economy and a multiparty system and -- for some time to come -- continued membership in NATO. (2)

Richard Halloran examines the reemergence of confrontation between President Pak and his critics -- the most potentially explosive of which are the students. An adjoining article re-

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ports a speech by President Park in which he warned that political troubles within South Korea could tempt the North Koreans to invade. Korean news dispatches have said that Seoul has received assurances of support from President Ford and that Secretary Schlesinger will visit South Korea this summer. (4)

John Finney writes the Defense Department is arguing against further large-scale shipments of arms to Vietnam until the South Vietnamese demonstrate a will to fight. Secretary Schlesinger is advancing the Pentagon position and he believes the South Vietnamese already have sufficient arms to defend Saigon. (7)

Drew Middleton writes that U.S. military sources believe the North Vietnamese have almost completed preparations for a final assault on Saigon, and they strongly doubt that Saigon could launch a spoiling operation to interfere with the communists' plans. Hanoi believes that no amount of new U.S. military assistance can stop them. (9)

Malcolm Brown relates the increasing bitterness towards the U.S. being felt by the South Vietnamese who have been loyal to Washington as they witness the baby airlift while being unable themselves to depart. (9)

The Pentagon believes that no sensitive weapons have fallen into North Vietnamese hands. (9)

Bernard Gwertzman writes that you see little prospect of saving Saigon short of an unexpected military turnaround. No efforts for negotiations with Hanoi are currently being pursued because the administration believes that Hanoi thinks it can achieve its goals militarily. (10)

A Moscow newspaper has sharply criticized the U.S. of interference in South Vietnam in violation of the Paris peace agreement. (10)

The Times believes that this is not the time for recriminations on the issue of Vietnam. The President should set an example to the nation of dignified and constructive comment. This is a time for humility, silence, and prayer. (28)

Another editorial calls on the U.S. to take up the moral commitment of humanitarian aid to the people of Vietnam. Vietnam now has been seen as an earthquake, not a battlefield. (28)

Donald Kirk of the Council on Foreign Relations argues that the only way out of the Cambodian bloodbath is for the U.S. to recognize the political realities and sue for an orderly surrender of the Cambodian government. (29)

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C. L. Sulzberger writes that if there is any lesson for Washington resulting from its Southeast Asian policy it is that Asians generally understand their political future better than even the best-intending Westerners. It is regrettable that after all your dealings with the North Vietnamese you did not find time to talk with Prince Sihanouk. Mr. Sihanouk is a serious, highly intelligent man and is an ideological conservative. (29)